

4 August 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: D/DCI/NI

SUBJECT: Proposed Interagency Intelligence Memorandum Providing Coordinated Response to Questions Raised by Congresswoman Sullivan on Cuban Presence in Panama

1. In a memorandum dated 3 August 1976, the National Security Council (NSC) requested NIO assistance in replying to a letter to President Ford from Congresswoman Leonor Sullivan, Chairman of the House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries. In this letter, Congresswoman Sullivan asks seven specific questions concerning Cuban presence and activities in Panama. Ms. Mary Brownell, NSC Staff Member for Latin American Affairs has requested an interagency coordinated response to the seven questions. This will take the form of an Interagency Intelligence Memorandum (IIM). When it is received, the NSC will determine who will actually sign the Executive response to Congresswoman Sullivan. A copy of Congresswoman Sullivan's letter is attached.

2. Scope of the IIM. The paper will be confined to responses to the seven questions posed by Congresswoman Sullivan.

3. Drafting Responsibilities. The IIM will be drafted by OCI/

[Redacted]

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4. Scheduling of the IIM.

9 August (Close of business)

[Redacted]

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11 August

Edited draft to be delivered to State and DIA for coordination.

13 August

Telephonic concurrence from State and DIA.

17 August

Publication of IIM.

[Redacted]

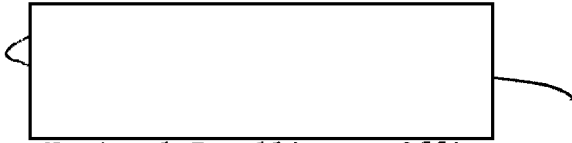
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5. I anticipate that we can obtain telephonic coordination on this paper. Should it be necessary to meet to resolve problems, that meeting could be held early in the week of 16 August with publication on 19 August at the latest. I see no reason to involve any agencies other than State, DIA, and CIA in this paper. Please advise the Steering Committee of this proposal.


Acting National Intelligence Officer
for Latin America

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Attachment:

Copy of Congresswoman Sullivan's letter

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U.S. House of Representatives

Committee on

Merchant Marine and Fisheries

Room 1334, Longworth House Office Building

Washington, D.C. 20515

CHIEF CLERK
 FRANCIS S. BELL
 MINORITY COUNSEL
 RICHARD N. SHARROD

July 27, 1976

Honorable Gerald R. Ford
 The President
 The White House
 Washington, D. C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

In May of this year there was an exchange of correspondence between the Department of Defense and the Congress with respect to the question of the extent of Cuban or other foreign military or paramilitary presence in the Republic of Panama or in the Panama Canal Zone. The reply fashioned by the Department of Defense in response to the inquiry of the House of Representatives in that particular exchange indicated that: (1) there were no more than 150 Cuban personnel in Panama; (2) that nearly a third of these are members of the Cuban diplomatic delegation; and (3) that there were "no Cuban military or paramilitary personnel known to be in the Republic of Panama, nor is there evidence of deposits of arms or ammunition in Panama or the Canal Zone not controlled by U.S. or Panamanian authorities".

Despite the May communication of the Defense Department, there continues to be persistent rumors and citizen reports emanating from the Canal Zone and other locations as to the presence and labors of various types of Cuban and other non-Panamanian personnel within the Republic of Panama. More specifically, the reports indicate that communist agitators, military cadre, and "technicians" are engaged in the infiltration of Panamanian society in key positions and areas and that the "party line" being spread by those who are infiltrating is clearly anti-American and directed toward wresting control of the Panama Canal from the United States.

It would be unthinkable that the United States of America, with every perfect right to the Panama Canal and Canal Zone, would

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feel compelled to deal and negotiate with adversaries who have our own demise as their chief goal. I doubt that any President could stand before the American people and seriously state that we should negotiate with a communist-inspired government in Panama in order to save the Canal which we operate in full accord with international law for the benefit of the commerce of the world.

Thus, in order to clear up to the degree possible the confusion and question that now exists as to the presence and influence of Cuban and other communist-oriented personnel in the Republic of Panama, and the relationship of that presence to the Canal, I am asking you, Mr. President, for some clear, forthright, and substantive answers to the following questions, which have been composed on the basis of citizen reports which have reached the Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries. The nature of the U.S. presence on the Isthmus of Panama and the importance of the Panama Canal to our country and to the commerce of the entire world necessitate an answer in as rapid a fashion as possible.

1. Does there exist information or reports to indicate that Cuban or other foreign personnel are now in the Republic of Panama teaching military or non-military students guerrilla warfare and terrorist tactics? In the presentation of such tactics, if they are being taught, is reference made directly or indirectly to the Panama Canal and Canal Zone? If personnel foreign to Panama are not teaching such tactics, are there Panamanian officials teaching these tactics with the advice of foreign nationals?

2. Does there exist information or reports to indicate that General Torrijos or members of the cabinet of the Panamanian Government have been saying in formal or informal circumstances that nationalization of the Panama Canal is the ultimate objective of the Panamanian Government after a new treaty is signed?

3. Does there exist information or reports that the Partido del Pueblo, which apparently operates openly in the Republic of Panama, is essentially a communist organization, controlled and directed by communist leaders? Does there exist information or reports that General Torrijos and/or members or former members of the Panamanian cabinet have made contributions to the Partido del Pueblo?

4. Does there exist information or reports to indicate that Colonel Noriega, the G-2 in Panama, has travelled to Cuba secretly in order to meet with various Cuban officials? If such trips have taken place, is it known who Colonel Noriega has met with while in Cuba?

5. Does there exist information or reports to indicate that U.S. citizens have been imprisoned on the island of Coiba by the Government of Panama? Is there information to indicate that U.S. citizens have been killed attempting to escape from that island prison?

6. Does there exist information or reports that indicate planning contingencies within the Government of Panama for seizure, violent or non-violent, of all or any parts of the Canal Zone or facilities within the Canal Zone? More specifically, is there any evidence at all to substantiate the rumor recently promulgated to the effect that some attempt at confrontation will be attempted by the Government of Panama in late 1976 in order to bring the Canal issue to the attention of the United Nations?

7. Does there exist information or reports to indicate that Cuban military troops have recently come into the Republic of Panama? If such an entry has occurred, what is the purpose of their entry into Panama? Does there exist information or reports to indicate that Angolan troops have recently come into the Republic of Panama?

Mr. President, I cannot overemphasize the importance of full disclosure of information or reports which may be in the possession of the Executive Branch with respect to the matters referenced above. If there is any indication that information relative to communism in Panama and threats to the Panama Canal are being covered up, then the people of the United States, given their deep attachment to the Panama Canal and what it stands for, will be both outraged and disillusioned. None of us want this to happen. That is why some very clear answers now can do nothing but good for our country. I have also dispatched letters requesting the needed information to the Secretaries of State and the Army, the USSSOUTHCOM Commander, and the Governor of the Canal Zone.

Sincerely,

Leonor K. Sullivan

Leonor K. (Mrs. John B.) Sullivan
Chairman

LKS:TMcr

cc: Hon. Melvin Price, Chmn., House Committee on Armed Services

Hon. Thomas Morgan, Chmn., Committee on International Relations

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